

1200 E Street NW (Garage)  
Washington  
District of Columbia

420  
HABS No. DC-350

HABS  
DC,  
WASH  
223-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. DC-350<sup>420</sup>

1200 E STREET (Service Station and Garage)

Location: 1200 E Street, NW. Washington, D.C.

USGS Washington West Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 18.324060.4306890.

Present Owner: Cabot, Cabot and Forbes Co.  
60 State Street  
Boston, Massachusetts

Present Occupant: Ground level: Exxon Service Station;  
Parking deck: Washington Garage Co.; both lessees of Donald H. Swagert Estate.

Present Use: Filling station on street level, parking garage on 1st story deck; to be demolished 1979.

Significance: The structure is located within the Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site. From an architectural and historical standpoint, the building represents an example of the almost extinct genre of covered service stations, popular circa 1930-1950.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. History of the Structure:

- 1 Date of erection: circa 1951. Mrs. Everett, Secretary of the Donald H. Swagert Estate which leases the property established this date on the basis of her own recollections and conversations with other longtime employees of the Washington Garage Co.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The General Assessment Records of the District of Columbia show that by the 1930's Christian Heurich owned this corner property along with all other property in Square 291 except that now occupied by the Pennsylvania Building. Under the will of Christian Heurich at death all property in the District of Columbia and not previously transferred, was granted in fee simple to Christian Heurich Jr., Anita Heurich Eckles, and Karla Heurich King, (recorded May 13, 1965, liber 12,410, folio 116, inst. 16,198).

The Washington Garage Co. and the Exxon (formerly Esso) Corporation have a relatively long history on the site as shown by the following Land and Building Permit records:

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Sign Permit No. 4,231, dated November 2, 1926, grants permission to the Washington Garage Co, listed as "owner", to place a 10' x 10' sign on the wall of building 1216 reading "Standard Esso".

In 1931 a Raze Permit (No. 144,322, dated July 1, 1931) was issued to the Standard Oil Co. of NJ to "take down piece by piece one brick building" which was 50' wide, 20' long, and 20' high, located on lots 808 and 810 and had the address 1200-02-04 E Street, NW. The demolition work was performed by the Hechinger Engineering Corp., 15th and H Streets, NE, Washington, DC.

On July 6, 1931 the Standard Oil Company of NJ, listed as "owner" applied for permission to install 4 1,000 gal. gasoline tanks on lots 808 and 810 Sq. 291 (Permit No. 44, 463).

On September 10, 1931 the Washington Garage Filling Station #2 obtained a Motor Permit (No. 146,467) to install a motor to run an air compressor for a one story brick gasoline station.

Building Permit No. 169,055 dated January 27, 1934 shows that the "owner" Washington Square Garage received permission to erect a wire fence 6'-0" high entirely on the land of owner on property listed as 410 12th Street.

Sign Permit No. 232, 626, dated May 21, 1940 shows that the S & H Service Station, 1200 E Street, NW, applied for permission to erect a 5' x 12' sign reading "Esso Motor Oil Unexcelled".

According to Repair Permit No. 4,397, dated November 17, 1923, a restaurant was operating in the brick building which formerly occupied old lot 12 or new lot 814. This building was demolished at some point prior to 1950 to make way for the present 1 story parking deck, because the land Records show a lease from H. A. Swagert, Sr. to the Esso Standard Oil Co. for 6.5 years commencing January 1, 1951 and covering lots 813, 808, 809, 810, 35 and 814 of Square 291. (recorded November 6, 1950, liber 9,336, folio 86, inst. 47,318). In 1957 this lease was cancelled and H.A. Swagert, Sr. entered into a new agreement with the Esso Standard Oil Co. (recorded January 9, 1957, liber 10,789, folio 429, inst. 60,744).

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- B. Sources of Information: Land Records, District of Columbia, National Archives, Civil Division, Legislative and Natural Resources Branch, Record Group 351: District of Columbia Building Permit Records 1877-1949, District of Columbia General Assessment Records, Washingtoniana Collection, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, Washington, DC.

Prepared by Bill Noble  
Cabot, Cabot and Forbes  
for the  
Pennsylvania Avenue  
Development Corporation

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

- A. General Statement: The structure is a one-story parking garage and service station constructed of reinforced cast-in-place concrete circa 1951. The exterior is strictly utilitarian in its appearance and lacks any form of surface articulation or detail.
- B. Description of Exterior:
1. Overall Dimensions: The building measures approximately eighty-nine feet in width by one hundred thirty-five feet in depth. The height of the front wall on both E Street and 12th Street, measured from the sidewalk to the top of the upper deck parapet, is approximately eighteen feet. The plan of the building is rectangular.
  2. Foundation: The foundation is assumed to be reinforced cast-in-place concrete.
  3. Wall construction: The exterior walls on E Street and 12th Street are composed of reinforced concrete piers spaced approximately twenty-five to thirty feet on centers, supporting reinforced concrete girders approximately three feet in depth. The girders rise vertically another three feet to form the upper deck parapet wall at the building perimeter. The open bays between each of the piers extend flush to the sidewalk pavement on both the E Street and 12th Street sides of the building. Three open bays exist on the E Street side and five open bays exist on the 12th Street side. The south, or rear side of the structure also contains three open bays, all of which contain low walls approximately three feet in height above grade.

4. Structural system: The floor or deck framing for the roof deck is composed of reinforced cast-in-place concrete joists which run in a east-west direction. The joists are spaced approximately two feet on centers, and bear on either the girders which run in a north-south direction, or on the exterior perimeter wall girders.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways: One doorway is present on the E Street facade within the western-most bay. Other doors exist within this bay as part of the offices of the garage.
  - b. Windows: One window is present on the first floor level of the E Street facade within the western-most bay.
6. Roof shape and material: The roof deck is cast-in-place concrete.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The ground floor is composed of an open space defined by the square piers of the three bays which run east to west, and the five bays which run north to south. The upper roof deck is completely open and is surrounded by a parapet wall. Access to the upper deck is provided through a wall opening at the second floor ramp level of 1208-1214 E Street.
2. Flooring: All floors are finished concrete.
3. Wall and ceiling finishes: Most surfaces are painted concrete or painted plaster.

Prepared by John Hecker  
David McLaren Hart and Associates  
Boston, Massachusetts  
for the  
Pennsylvania Avenue Development  
Corporation

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC) in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort in the demolition of buildings in Square 291. John A. Burns, AIA, was the HABS project coordinator. The historical information was prepared by Bill Noble of Cabot, Cabot and Forbes for PADC, and the architectural description was prepared by John Hecker of David McLaren Hart and Associates for PADC. The data was edited and prepared for transmittal by Emily J. Harris, an architectural historian in the HABS office in October, 1979. Photographs were taken by Barry Brooks in April 1979.